

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 2nd July 2025

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Harris, Lythgoe, McInnes and Walmsley**

**David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Chris Warren, Director of Resources, s151 Officer
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal, Monitoring Officer
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Finance**

Also present 1 member of the press

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Leader declared an interest in agenda item D3, Household Support Fund – 2nd allocation, as she was the Chief Officer of Homewise. She would leave the room for that item.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No written questions had been received.

6. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

An update was provided from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16th June 2025 with thanks to the Chair.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER HERITAGE ARCADE, RAWTENSTALL

The Lead Member for Economic Development outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the redevelopment, enter into an agreement with Barnfield Investment Properties to develop a feasibility assessment and delegate authority to the relevant Officers and Lead Member to progress the project.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- This was a feasibility study at this stage but members were pleased to see action around the buildings.
- Officers were thanked for leading on this.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet agreed that the council leads on the project to redevelop the Former Heritage Arcade, Rawtenstall and surrounding opportunities as an integral part of the Plan for Neighbourhoods investment plan.
2. That the council enters into an agreement with Barnfield Investment Properties to develop the feasibility assessment for the Former Heritage Arcade, Rawtenstall as part of the Rossendale Together Barnfield (RTB) joint venture partnership.
3. Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development to enter into any agreements related to this project within the agreed project budget, including the procurement of any required consultancy and contractor services.

Reason for Decision:

The RTB partnership offered the most time-efficient route to obtain comprehensive feasibility evidence on this significant derelict asset, ensuring informed decision-making for Plan for Neighbourhoods investment allocation over the next four years.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. BUILDING DECARBONISATION PROJECT

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the council's Building Heat Decarbonisation Plan for 2025/26. To approve Capital spend of £100k for decarbonisation work and £100k for the integration of low carbon and energy efficient solutions into the Rawtenstall Market project. Cabinet was also asked to delegate authority to the relevant Officers and Lead members to undertake and approve procurement.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- A number of years ago the council made a commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.
- This was an important project for the next generation.
- The schemes not only reduced the impact on the environment but brought about significant cost reductions.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the council's Building Heat Decarbonisation Plan, and the programme of decarbonisation works recommended within the plan for the 2025/26 financial year.
2. Cabinet approved capital spend of £100k already included within the 2025/26 Capital Programme, funded from the Carbon Reduction Fund, to finance the proposed decarbonisation works.
3. Cabinet approved a further capital spend of £100k in the 2025/26 Capital Programme, funded from the Carbon Reduction Fund, to finance the integration of low-carbon and energy-efficient solutions into the Rawtenstall Market Project.
4. Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Economic Development, Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Lead Members for Resources and Economic Development to undertake and approve the relevant procurement activities.

Reason for Decision:

As part of the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and its aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality across operations by 2030, Rossendale Borough Council was working to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from its operations. A major focus of this effort was

reducing emissions from operational buildings. The successful completion of the building decarbonisation project would support the council in achieving net zero emissions across its corporate assets by 2030. This initiative aligned with the strategic priorities outlined in the council's Corporate Plan 2021-2025.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The Leader of the Council left the room for the next time

9. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 7 – 2ND ALLOCATION

The Lead member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to accept the second allocation of funding to deliver the 2025/26 Household Support Fund and Affordable Warmth programmes. Cabinet was also asked to approve funding to partner organisations to enable them to support financially vulnerable residents of Rossendale. Authority was also sought to delegate minor amendments to the criteria and budget to the Lead Director and Lead Member.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Funding had reduced from the previous year. Officers to confirm if this was as a result of Lancashire County Council retaining some of the funding to cover free school meals.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the acceptance of £183k as a second allocation to deliver the 2025/26 Household Support Fund programme and Affordable warmth programmes respectively and £27.5k to deliver the Affordable Warmth Programme.
2. Cabinet approved funding to partner organisations to enable them to support the most financially vulnerable Rossendale residents.
3. Minor amendments to the criteria and budget were delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

Reason for Decision:

Council should agree the recommendations to allow the early commencement of the fund.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The Leader of the Council returned to the meeting

10. VALLEY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider the update and associated achievements for 2024/25.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Having details in one place showed how much was taking place in the borough.
- Officers and members were thanked for their hard work on project delivery.
- Businesses and community groups were part of the partnership delivering quality work.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered and noted the council's annual Valley Plan update and associated achievements for 2024/2025

Reason for Decision:

The Valley Plan Annual Report 2024/2025 was a tool used to summarise the council's key achievements and progress in relation to the priorities outlined within the Valley Plan.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 4 2024/25

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring Report.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The Finance Team were thanked for their work and for the successful completion of the Statutory Accounts within the deadline.
- The Communities Teams were thanked for using their 'capacity building model' of delivery.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet noted the content of the Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring Report.

Reason for Decision:

To note the Quarter 4 Monitoring Report.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

12. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT – QUARTER 4 2024/25

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider the council's performance during Quarter 4 of 2024/25.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Work around the Disabled Facilities Grant was specifically mention which allowed our most vulnerable residents to remain in their own homes. Thanks were expressed to the team.
- The report was an honest account of where the council was and what we would continue to work on.
- Was there a correlation between sickness absence and annual appraisals.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered and noted the council's performance during Quarter 4 2024-25 as detailed in the report and Appendix.

Reason for Decision:

Monitoring the council's performance would enable Cabinet to identify and consider any service actions, projects, performance measures or corporate risks requiring further action.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 7.16pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE